



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION

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MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2002 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Vice Chairman Kowalski called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners' Haber, Kowalski, Maheu, Milewski, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye and Wilkinson. Commissioners' Brammer, Carozza, Gomeau and McDonald were excused. Commissioner Johnson arrived at 9:42 a.m. and Commissioner Vendetta arrived at 9:55 a.m. Staff members Morrissette, Lewandowski, O'Neil, and Ouellette were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2002.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2002 meeting. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for July 15, 2002 – August 14, 2002.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Milewski and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Wilkinson to approve the Staff Report for the period of July 15, 2002 - August 14, 2002. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to approve the Staff Report for August 15, 2002 – September 14, 2002.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to approve the Staff Report for the period of August 15, 2002 - September 14, 2002. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4 a.) Mr. Morrissette gave an agency budget update based upon a summary sheet distributed that detailed additional requests the agency submitted as part of the biennium budget for FY 03/04 and 04/05. He stated the agency is very restricted regarding requests above and beyond basic inflationary guidelines as set by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

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Mr. O'Neil gave an overview of the budget summary.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired if this budget summary was basically a wish list.

Mr. O'Neil replied that the additional items noted would enable the agency to fulfill its mission more effectively.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired, with the exception of the five-year plan, what were the chances in getting approval for the requested items.

Mr. O'Neil stated that in the past, budget requests for equipment have not been approved as part of the budget but have been moved as a bond item. But with the current state of the economy he stated that he is not sure how the requests will do.

Mr. Morrisette stated that on Friday of last week the agency received guidance from OPM for submittal of our options report. This is the document where we can request program expansions. We were also asked to submit a reduction option totaling 10%. We will be working on that during the next few weeks.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired about a budget item proposed for a Kids Safety Bus and whether it is to supplement or replace existing equipment.

Mr. Morrisette stated that long term this item is to replace the existing equipment. This item was originally requested as part of our 00/01 – 01/02 Biennium Budget. He then asked Mr. Lewandowski to elaborate on the subject.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that FEMA announced a grant for \$10 million for fire prevention and education programs. He and Mr. Emons have submitted a grant application for a Kids Safety Bus, a straight vehicle model probably 35 to 40 feet long with capabilities to teach and practice home escape plans as well as any other areas of fire and life safety education.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired if there were any other revenue streams we could look at for funding items such as radios, chemical/radiological metering devices and chemical/personal protective equipment.

Mr. Morrisette stated we are still trying to work out a training plan with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). This plan would cover both equipment and training. The last round of grant funding through the Department of Justice was just approved for Connecticut at just over \$4 million. As such there's going to have training associated with that equipment.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the decontamination trailers that are being purchased for the various communities throughout the state as well as for hospitals and regional response teams will probably be delivered to the Academy with the initial training conducted at this facility. It's not clear yet if the manufacturer will deliver the training or if they'll offer a train-the-trainer format. He expects the agency will be requested to pick up and support the initial training and annual refresher training.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that some of the grants we receive are fairly small under \$100,000 a year, for weapons of mass destruction training. There is a very small percentage of the grant funds that is available for equipment.

Moving to item 4 b.) Mr. Morrisette gave an update on the Fallen Firefighters Memorial project. He thanked all the Commissioners who participated in the memorial dedication last month. It was a successful event aside from the weather. There are continued plans to raise funds. That probably won't cease any time soon but at this point we will be closing this out as a regular agenda item.

Commissioner Haber stated that the fundraising is still going on. The dedication went over fairly well despite the heat. There was a good turnout and the comments and remarks that were made afterwards were really outstanding and made the committee feel good for the efforts they put into it.

Commissioner Maheu thanked the Commission, especially Alberta Ouellette for all her efforts. This event went off like clockwork and she had a lot to do with handling of all the logistics, etc. and she really deserves a round of applause. She did a fantastic job!

Mr. Lewandowski stated that it's amazing to see how many people stop by the memorial from in state and out-of-state every day.

Moving to item 4 c.) Commissioner Stankye gave a CSFA Education Committee update. He stated that a month ago the committee met with Representative Pawelkiewicz who sponsored the initial legislation which resulted in the engineering study. The total bonding package for the eight Regional Schools is approximately \$60 million. With that three new schools will be built and renovation of the other five. Another meeting is scheduled tomorrow evening in Wethersfield with Representative Andrea Stillman who serves as Vice Chairman of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee to discuss funding strategies.

Mr. Morrisette stated that it's possible sometime in the future that some representatives of the committee will be here to conduct a short presentation on the plan. He indicated that he has the master plan available in his office should anybody wish to review it. At some point the committee will be seeking formal action on the part of the Commission regarding their endorsement and support. The other thing we accomplished at the last meeting was to (handout included in the Commission package) re-engage the committee's activity in reviewing the issue of "Mission Delineation." At this point, the document was put out there for review and discussion in hopes we can formally agree on areas of responsibility for both us as an agency as well as the eight regional fire schools. At this point he asked that Commissioners take a look at the document.

Moving to item 4 d.), Statewide Disaster Response Plan Update. Mr. Morrisette stated that included in the Commission package was a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was distributed to all the Fire Chiefs statewide seeking their participation in the plan. A number of the MOUs are starting to make their way back to our office. Most communities have to go through some type of a legal review process prior to signing off on the document. The Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association is working on another side of the plan and that's to begin staffing volunteer positions in support of the overall plan. There are a number of regional coordinator positions and other support positions that are necessary to make the plan operational.

Moving to item 4 e.), Regional Foam Trailer Program Update. Mr. Morrisette stated that the trailers are under construction as noted in the Staff Report. We do expect a site visit to the factory probably within the next couple of weeks at which time we anticipate the first trailer to be about 95% complete. At that time the committee will have an opportunity to inspect the trailer. We're still trying to work out the MOU between the Commission and the host communities. One curve ball that did come up recently deals with the insurance issue. Originally advice from the State Insurance Purchasing Board was that the state would insure the trailers. The Insurance Purchasing Board then went to the underwriters and got a different opinion that the host communities will be the ones responsible to insure the trailers. He stated that he is not sure whether that will put up any roadblocks.

Commissioner Maheu inquired about the anticipated delivery date.

Mr. Morrisette stated that the original delivery date for the first unit was expected by the end of this month. There may be a delay of a week or two because of some problems attaining the pumps. The factory will provide training to the host communities and we'll have a couple of our adjunct instructors here as there will be a need for recurring training. Also as part of our budget we did look to obtain some additional funding for maintenance of the units as well as for a foam stock in case we need to replenish the units quickly.

Commissioner Wilkinson inquired if training would only be conducted for the departments where the trailer is housed or would it be necessary to train all the departments in the region that maybe utilizing them.

Commissioner Johnson stated that the original plan is to train the department where the trailer is housed. That department will have to transport the trailer to the scene, set it up and operate it.

Moving to item 4 f.) Mr. Morrisette reported on Senator Dodd's visit to the Academy. He thanked the Commissioners who were able to come on late notice to meet with Senator Dodd. This was a relatively successful endeavor. We received a lot of press coverage and it's led to some additional efforts to move forward with a funding initiative for state fire training programs. A parallel effort is ongoing with Interspiro who has gained NIOSH approval for their masks for ChemBio. They are also seeking Congressional support for some of their efforts. They've teamed up with us to work with Senator Dodd on a joint program where we possibly could serve as a regional training facility very similar to the consortiums which are available now in Alabama, New Mexico and elsewhere. If that piece falls through, the Interspiro folks have employed a full time publicity/advertising firm who is helping to promote funding for the state fire training facilities.

We've been contacted several times by Senator Dodd's Office for some additional information and it appears that when they come back into session later in the fall this will be one of the initiatives the Senator will put forward.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how the regional recognition would affect the Academy's operation.

Mr. Morrisette stated that it really depends on the scope. The clarity of that is not there as of yet. A discussion period followed.

Moving to item 5 a.) New Business - Election of Officers. Vice Chairman Kowalski called for a motion to nominate a slate of officers.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to nominate the following slate of officers:

Peter S. Carozza, Jr., Chairman
Kevin J. Kowalski, Vice Chairman
Edward F. Haber, Secretary

The motion was unanimously approved.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Vendetta and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to close the nominations. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Maheu and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to elect the slate of officers as presented Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski thanked the Commission for their vote of confidence on behalf of Chairman Carozza, Secretary Haber and himself.

Moving to item 5 b.) Annual Report FY 2001/2002 – Mr. Morrisette stated that the Commission did grant permission to move forward with development and submittal of the annual report to the Governor. The report was processed accordingly and Commissioners should have received, over the summer, a copy of the annual report. He asked Commissioners for any questions at this time and for approval of the document.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Vendetta to approve the FY 2001/2002 Annual Report. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5 c.) Certification Reference Overview. Mr. Morrisette stated that Mr. Piechota was to have reported on this item but he is currently involved in an accreditation site visit for the Pro Board out in Nebraska. Mr. Morrisette stated that Mr. Piechota asked him to bring the issue forward for informational purposes. He indicated that in the near future there would be a third major publisher of training reference material primarily in the area of FF-I and II. The new publisher is a consortium of Jones & Bartlett Publishers in conjunction with the NFPA. The original vendor or only publisher was IFSTA. Several years back we added Delmar to that list and now we have a third being Jones & Bartlett.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that the Training Division has assigned two adjunct instructors to review chapters of the text so this effort is moving along at a very fast pace.

Mr. Morrisette stated that historically selection of appropriate training materials has been a local decision. The Commission has left it up to the local entity to choose what product they want to use in terms of meeting the applicable standard(s). One concern Mr. Piechota raised is that each time we add

a new reference source it adds an expense to us in terms of re-referencing and validating test items locally.

Vice Chairman Kowalski inquired if the Training Division has had any feedback on this matter.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that Mr. Piskura met with Jones & Bartlett several months ago and he feels that it probably will be a better product.

Commissioner Maheu thanked Mr. Piechota for assisting his agency in gaining accreditation for their Telecommunicator program. He stated that once the review is complete their Telecommunicator program would be eligible for national certification. Mr. Piechota was instrumental in helping their agency accomplish this task.

Commissioner Ouellette commended the staff and especially Mr. Piechota for conducting an excellent memorial service at the Academy in memory of the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

Commissioner Ouellette praised Chairman Carozza for his involvement in the Muscular Dystrophy Telethon on Labor Day. Chairman Carozza did an outstanding job and that's certainly reflective on the firefighters of the State of Connecticut. He expressed his sincere appreciation to Chairman Carozza.

Commissioner Ouellette inquired about the total number of classes (i.e. 310) delivered during the fiscal years versus previous years.

Mr. Morrisette stated that he would have to do research over a three to four year period and report back at the next meeting.

Commissioner Wilkinson stated that he and Commissioner Haber had the honor of serving on the Merit Awards Committee for the Connecticut State Firefighters Association (CSFA). He advised members of the Commission that at the recent CSFA Convention held in Thomaston, State Fire Administrator Jeff Morrisette received a merit award for his actions taken to rescue a civilian in a very serious apartment house fire in the Town of Wethersfield in his capacity as a volunteer firefighter. He commended Mr. Morrisette for a job well done!

Mr. Morrisette stated that Commissioners are welcomed to attend the Recruit Graduation Ceremony that is scheduled for September 30 at 1:30 p.m. at the New England Air Museum.

Mr. Morrisette stated that as of last Friday the agency submitted a grant application to FEMA as part of their \$10 million supplemental grant for public education.

Mr. Morrisette stated that last July he and Commissioner Vendetta went to New York to visit the FDNY Fire Zone, an interactive fire education facility located in Rockefeller Plaza. We have a long-range vision of doing something similar here in Connecticut. He stated that he and Commissioner Vendetta have an opportunity later this morning to meet with the Acting Head of the Capitol City Economic Development Authority that is overseeing the development of Adriaen's Landing to discuss the feasibility of developing a similar venture.

Mr. Lewandowski reported on the several ongoing activities in the Training Division. Charter Oak College recently completed a site visit and seven of our courses were granted college credits. Courses that were accredited are Fire Department Safety Officer, Fire Officer 1, II and III, Fire Service Instructor I and II and Public Fire and Life Safety Educator programs.

The National Fire Academy has endorsed our Fire Service Instructor I on their web site and that means that our curriculum is available to all 50 states and the metros. This helps us secure federal funding.

The Training Division has been distributing CDs to all fire departments primarily for Hazardous Materials and Thermal Imaging train-the-trainer programs. We found that there were problems, because of different platforms, people were having problems opening the files. We've investigated some ways to improve that so that our future CDs, regardless of computer platform or software, will open easier.

An updated Rockwell Audio-Visual catalogue has been updated and is nearly ready for publication.

A suite has been filed against the CPAT program with the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity here in the State of Connecticut. A candidate felt that they prepared properly for the test and that they should have passed the test although they failed. There is also a pending suite in Austin, TX.

Commissioner Johnson inquired about the percentage of pass/fail of the candidates.

Mr. Lewandowski stated that it depends on the class. Overall we are somewhere around 70% so we're a little bit better than the national average. With females we are ahead of the national average. If candidates properly prepare for the test they seem to go through with no problems.

Mr. Lewandowski reminded Commissioners about the upcoming Gordon Graham Seminars on October 18 in Milford and October 19 in Meriden.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that after a discussion with Mr. Morrisette he would like to reform a committee to review fees and tuition the Commission had a few years ago.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Vendetta and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to appoint a Fee Structure Review Committee.

The **MOTION** was **AMENDED** by Commissioner Vendetta and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Milewski to reinstate the Fee Structure Review Committee. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that during Senator Dodd's visit he had the opportunity to bring up to the Senator the IRS impact on the Volunteer Tax Abatement issue. He stated that he recently received some information back from Senator Dodd's Office. Congressman Larson has brought forward legislation on this issue. He also indicated that he received a letter yesterday from Congresswoman Nancy Johnson's Office referencing a letter that they sent from her committee who is cognizant over the IRS seeking an interpretation on the tax abatement issue. He stated that he has been working on

behalf of the Simsbury Fire Department to clarify some of the issues and also wanted to bring this matter to the Commissioners' attention. He indicated that he was also pursuing this matter in Washington as well as locally.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he received a letter yesterday from Congresswoman Rosa DeLoro on this matter.

Vice Chairman Kowalski stated that all the support we can get on this matter will be very much appreciated.

Mr. Morrisette stated that an Office of Legislative Research Report on the tax abatement issue issued just last month was included in the Commissioners' packages. This report pretty much states that the IRS ruling deals specifically with the Massachusetts program. Our position is the way the two programs (Mass and CT) were developed is entirely different. The language within Massachusetts specifically states that you will receive a tax abatement if you perform a service. Connecticut's legislation is just enabling. A volunteer doesn't have to do anything to get the tax abatement. Thus, from the basic language standpoint the feeling is that it should not be taxable.

Commissioner Haber stated that the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association will be celebrating their 100th Anniversary on Friday night at the Aqua Turf at 6:00 p.m. Invitations have been sent out to all membership throughout the state and all other organizations. The cut-off date was yesterday, however if anyone here would like to attend they can contact him or Buzzy Schaeffer at 860-429-0025.

Vice Chairman Kowalski reminded everyone that the next Commission meeting is October 29, 2002 here at the Academy.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Vice Chairman Kowalski adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m.